



# **Directing with KDC Theatre**

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2008

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## 1 – A brief word from the Chair

Hello! Just over three years ago, I came along to my first ever KDC Newcomers meeting (more about those later!). More than a little nervous at the thought of launching myself into new theatrical endeavours with lots of strangers, I soon found myself welcomed by a group of warm, friendly people – who also happened to be very talented!

That has been my experience of KDC ever since – lots of fun, lots of friendship, and lots of fantastic shows – and now I'm Chair. What I look for in Directors is the potential to give both new and old members the same positive experiences I've always had.

It's a tall order, I know, but if you're passionate about theatre then you're halfway there. Plus if you are chosen to direct, myself, Eddie, and the rest of the committee will be on hand to give you as much help and support as possible, from Newcomers night to post-production.

I look forward to meeting you soon and hearing your ideas!

Best Wishes,

Jenny McIntyre  
KDC Chair.

## 2 – A brief word from the Artistic Director

Hello. Like Jenny, I have been with KDC for just over three years but in that time, I've gained an enormous amount of experience in all aspects of theatre as well as being part of, and enjoying, some tremendous productions. Before becoming Artistic Director, I was New Writing Co-ordinator for two years and am proud of the work we have achieved in nurturing new writers and new directors.

As Artistic Director, I am keen to continue the tradition of encouraging new directing talent to our company as well as welcoming back those who have directed with us in the past. Directing isn't easy – there's a lot of work involved in bringing a play on the page to life on the stage (often you might find yourself in the role of Mr/Mrs Fix It or acting coach or counsellor all in one) - but a director's role can be fun, rewarding and delightful when the play you've read, loved and wanted to see staged finally comes together.

This booklet sets out what we're looking for from directors and informs you of what you can expect from us in the way of help and advice. Therefore, please do take the time to read through it carefully before Jenny and I meet with you.

I look forward to hearing about the play(s) that you wish to direct with us.

Best wishes.

Eddie Coleman  
Artistic Director

## 3 - Background

### WHAT IS KDC?

KDC Theatre is a Central London based amateur theatre group dedicated to giving Londoners the chance to put on and perform plays. We are always on the look out for new actors, directors, technical crew and anyone else (i.e. costume or set designers) who want to get involved.

We have a reputation for high quality amateur theatre – by amateur we mean that no one gets paid for acting in, directing or crewing productions, all profits are invested in the following season's plays.

We are a company with a rolling membership. This means that although we have people on our mailing list, anyone can turn up to audition (we have advertised in The Stage, Time Out and online and we currently have a mailing list of 500 members who regularly receive emails from us with news of shows, auditions and social events. If you wish to be on the mailing list, visit our website – [www.kdctheatre.com](http://www.kdctheatre.com) – and subscribe).

As well as producing high quality shows, KDC also tries to be a very social and friendly society, shows are never pre-cast and this is something we stress each season; new faces always get cast in shows alongside old hands. We want the plays to roll out of the rehearsal rooms and into the pub and for everyone to feel welcome.

***In 2009, the company celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday and we are planning an exciting programme of celebrations.***

### OUR SEASONS

KDC usually produces two shows per season, three seasons a year (spring, summer and winter). All shows normally run for 1 week each, concurrently including the plays from the new writing programme.

Each season we attract a wide range of actors, directors and crew. People come from all walks of life from people who have never acted before to people who are either trying to get an agent or trying to change agents.

The rehearsal period for the shows varies each season, but is normally between 8-10 weeks. Rehearsals are for 2 hours on Monday and Wednesday evenings and for 4

hours on Sundays (rotating each week between 12.00-4.00 and 4.00-8.00).

There is a different rehearsal period for the new writing week. Further information on this can be found in the **New Writing Programme section below.**

The plays are funded by profits from previous shows and by the actors in the plays. KDC asks all the actors cast to pay subs - currently £70.00 (employed) and £35.00 (unemployed, students etc). **Directors are not asked to pay subs.**

## **NEW WRITING PROGRAMME**

Since 2005, KDC Theatre has been adding an additional week's run to several of our seasons. This is for our new writing programme and the new writing week consists of a production of two new one-act plays that have come from our New Writing Programme.

In addition to plays produced on stage, we produce at least one evening of rehearsed readings of new one-act plays at a London Fringe Theatre as part of our New Writing Programme. This is where actors perform a play with scripts in hand and are usually directed by directors new to KDC Theatre. In addition to providing an opportunity for playwrights to hear their work read and actors the chance to play different roles without the need for lengthy rehearsal periods, the evening is often seen as a good training ground for would be directors for our company.

However, you don't need to have directed a play for a rehearsed reading to be eligible to apply to direct a full production for KDC. If you are interested in directing for the evening of rehearsed readings, contact our New Writing Co-ordinator – Andy Marchant – via email at [new.writing@kdctheatre.com](mailto:new.writing@kdctheatre.com)

## 4 – CHOOSING OUR DIRECTORS

We are always on the lookout for new directors.

What we look for in a director is somebody who has some directing experience, a basic knowledge of theatre, an understanding of actors and acting and bags of enthusiasm.

When we talk about directing experience, it would be helpful to know if you have had any previous directing experience. Your previous directing experience will help the Chair and the Artistic Director decide whether you would be suitable to direct for KDC.

However, please don't worry if you haven't had any directing experience as there are several ways you can gain experience with KDC:

- Firstly, you could always offer to assist on a current KDC production either as an Assistant Director or backstage. If you wish to do that please contact Eddie Coleman, KDC Artistic Director, on [artistic@kdctheatre.com](mailto:artistic@kdctheatre.com)
- Secondly, you could always contact our New Writing Co-ordinator (Andy Marchant on [new.writing@kdctheatre.com](mailto:new.writing@kdctheatre.com)) as he is also looking for directors to direct rehearsed readings. And often new directors have found that working on the rehearsed readings has been a good training ground for them when they come to apply for a full production with us.

## 5 - PICKING A PLAY TO DIRECT

The main things we look for when choosing plays are:

- A director's enthusiasm and vision for the play(s) they are proposing
- Large cast
- Roles for women.

The first point is the most important. As a director, it's not enough just to like a play, you have to have a clear vision for it which you can communicate to the cast. We want to see that you have ideas about how you will make the production your own, and ensure it's more than just the words on the page.

The reason for the last two points are due to the nature of our Company. Because the shows are predominately funded by the cast's subs we encourage large cast plays so we have more money and therefore bigger budgets for shows. Therefore, we would ask that you choose plays with no less than 8 members in the cast.

We also have a large female membership so where possible we encourage shows with good female roles.

You'll find a list of the plays that have been performed by KDC since 2000 at **Annex A**. The list is just a guide to the sort of shows KDC produces, it is not a list of shows we will no longer put on. However, we would probably not want to produce the show if it has already been staged by KDC within the last five years.

## 6 - PROPOSALS AND INTERVIEWS

Anyone who wants to direct with us needs to put in a proposal for the play they wish to direct and then have an interview with the Chair and the Artistic Director to find out more about you and why you have put forward your play choices.

Don't worry - the interviews are more of an informal chat (usually held in a pub!) and we ask all prospective directors (even if they have worked with KDC before) to submit a proposal for 1 to 3 shows they wish to direct (we pick the show we want you to direct out of the ones you have proposed).

The proposal is a short note from you setting out your choices. It should set out the name of the show, the playwright, a cast list and a short synopsis of the play. It would also help to know if the play is a rights or a non-rights play, as we have to pay for the rights to perform plays.

An example of a proposal is attached at **Annex B**.

Once the proposal has been received the Artistic Director and Chair arrange to meet you to discuss your plays and ideas for staging and to talk about the way KDC operates.

From these interviews and proposals two directors are chosen.

## **QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED AT YOUR INTERVIEW**

The interview is friendly, informal, often in a pub and is not an examination where the person with the most correct answers wins a directing spot with KDC. Here are some of the questions you may be asked:

- Why did you choose these plays?
- What ideas do you have for staging the plays?
- What previous directing experience do you have?
- How would you run your auditions and rehearsals?
- How will you make your rehearsals fun for the cast?
- How would you discipline people who turn up late, are disruptive or don't learn their lines?
- What sort of production team (i.e. stage manager, lighting and/or sound operator) might you require and if you have anyone in mind.
- What would you spend your budget on? – We will give you a budget of £300.00 and would like to know how you plan to keep control of it. Further information on your budget can be found on **Page 14.**
- What problems have you had to deal with when you've directed a show in the past and how have you solved them?

## **IN RETURN THE CHAIR AND THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR WILL:**

- Provide you with an understanding of how KDC works
- Discuss with you the dates for
  - The forthcoming season
  - The KDC newcomers meeting\*
  - The auditions (location and dates)
  - The rehearsals (location and dates)

*(\* Attending the New Members night is crucial for all directors. You **must** be available for this night as this is an opportunity for you to promote the play you're directing, take questions about your play and to answer any queries from our members about how you would conduct rehearsals and auditions. A perfect opportunity to whet the appetite of many of our members)*

- Tell you about the theatre that has been booked for the forthcoming season (for example, some theatres have small spaces so you will need to visit them to consider blocking for your production)
- Inform you about our subs system (Actors who are cast in your play must pay £70 or £35 (Concessions))
- Inform you about the role of the Committee Liaison Officer
- Inform you about publicity and poster design
- Ask if you have any questions or concerns

Finally, at the end of the interview, there will be a chance for you to ask as many questions as you want – within reason obviously.

### **WHAT IF I AM UNSUCCESSFUL AT MY INTERVIEW?**

Don't lose heart – if you are unsuccessful on this occasion, you can always apply again to direct in our next season. We will be happy to give you feedback about your interview should you want it.

Alternatively, there are other ways to get involved with KDC – The New Writing Programme (see page 5) or work back stage on one of our productions.

## 7- PRODUCTION

Our role - once the play and director have been chosen - is an advisory one. We will not tell you how we want things staged and acted.

However, there are a couple of basic rules KDC ask directors to follow:

- There must be no pre-casting,
- All acting members must be treated with respect both at auditions and during rehearsals. Remember they are all volunteers.
- You must tell your Committee Liaison Officer about any issues or problems you may have. They are there to help and support you, but they cannot do so if you don't keep them informed.
- The Artistic Director and/or Chair have the right to attend at least two of your rehearsals to check on how everything is going,

If you need any help during the 8-10 weeks you have before curtain up, please do not hesitate to contact a committee member. There are contact numbers on page 15 of this guide.

The rest of this section covers what you can expect from the committee and what we expect from you:

### **THEATRES**

As well as choosing the director and show, we also book the theatre.

KDC is a roaming company and has no home. We use different theatres (all of a similar size) around London. In the past, we have performed at the Hen and Chickens, Islington; The Barons Court, West Kensington and The Landor Theatre, Clapham North.

The theatre is booked (usually) before the shows are picked – therefore the directors have to work in the space provided and do not have a say over the theatre hired.

Most theatres KDC use are situated above or beneath a pub. You will have to follow the pubs and theatres instructions and not encroach on the pubs business. Being friendly and helpful to the bar and theatre staff goes a long way, however be aware the pub and theatre

are often owned and run by two different companies, therefore the pubs do not have to help out.

We have good relationships with most venues and pubs that we use. It will be your responsibility to make sure that these relationships continue. We want to ensure that once your show is over, the pub and theatre will look forward to having us back.

## **AUDITIONS**

KDC book the audition space for you.

Usually there will be at least two separate audition nights for people to turn up. There is then a call back audition for people you wish to see again on the Saturday following the weekly auditions.

As there are two shows per seasons you will need to discuss your cast with the other director (people can only act in one show) and 'argue' over actors you both want.

A committee member (not necessarily the Chair or Artistic Director) will be there to oversee these discussions and make sure it is a fair fight. This sounds a lot harder than it is. It does mean you will need to do a bit of give and take with the other director but there is normally enough talented actors to go around.

Also, once you have decided on your cast, you are required to inform all your YES's while a committee member will inform all the NO's.

## **REHEARSALS**

As with the audition space, KDC will book the rehearsal space for you. Rehearsal spaces are usually booked for you on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays (although these days may be subject to change).

You will be given your timetable for rehearsal dates (noting times and venues booked) by our secretary, from which you can work out your rehearsal schedule.

**PLEASE NOTE** - KDC will not pay for any extra rehearsal space. If you feel you need additional rehearsal time, you will need to find it/fund it yourself.\_

## **PRODUCER AND PRODUCTION TEAM:**

You will not be required to have a producer. However, some directors find it easier to work with one as it takes some pressure off them.

**PLEASE NOTE** - We do require you (or your producer or stage manager) to do a lot of work that in professional theatre would not be expected of the director – (For example you might end up having to make all your own props or helping with your lighting design) - if you need help though, please ask.

You are welcome to bring in your own team to do as many as the backstage technical roles as you feel appropriate. For those roles that you cannot fill yourself, KDC will help provide them for you. In order for this to happen, KDC will require, within a week of auditions being completed, a list of all technical positions that you need KDC to provide.

KDC will then allocate to you the names of people with the skills and desire to want to do technical work for your play to fill those roles. The KDC Technical Director will ensure that those who are allocated to your play are introduced to you promptly. It will be up to you to decide at what stage of the rehearsals you bring these people on board. You may wish to have a separate production meeting once everyone has been allocated a role on your tech team.

#### **COMMITTEE LIAISON OFFICER**

We will assign a Committee Liaison Officer (CLO) to assist with your Production. The CLO will be your first point of contact should you have queries or require any support. If they cannot help you themselves, they can usually point you in the direction of someone who can!

Their duties can include – acting as a liaison between the play and the committee, assist with castings or auditions (if you need assistance), trouble shoot any issues (e.g. budget extensions, re-casting etc...), follow up requests from the committee (e.g. pictures and biogs for the programmes) and attend at least 4 of your rehearsals.

The CLO can be any member of the committee except the Chair or Artistic Director. You can request a particular officer if you wish, but we cannot guarantee you'll get them. If a committee member is lucky enough to be cast in your show, they can also act as your CLO if both of you wish it.

#### **PUBLICITY AND PROGRAMMES:**

We will help design your production material – based on your ideas and will arrange printing.

We will also help write and distribute the press release.

We will ask for your design ideas and also for material for the press release and programmes.

Your cast will be asked to provide a (maximum) 50 word biography for the programme as well as a photo (we can arrange for one to be taken if an actor doesn't possess one). We will need your help in collecting these from the cast and making sure they write their biography in time.

### **BUDGET**

Each show is allocated a show budget by KDC (currently £300). As always with the theatre, money is tight and the show budget **should be considered an upper limit and not a target!**

Examples of items the show budget is intended for:

- purchase / hire of props, costumes & set (though remember to check out what's free in the Lock Up)
- special FX, sounds, any special lighting not provided by the theatre
- transport cost for any of the above (we recommend checking with the other show in your season to see if transport costs can be combined)

Note that everything purchased by the show budget (or taken from the Lock Up) remains the property of KDC and must be returned to the Lock Up at the end of the performance week. Any transport costs in returning KDC items, or items hired, should be allowed for in your show budget.

The show budget does not need to cover:

- performance rights
- hire of rooms for auditions
- hire of rooms for rehearsals (aside from any extra rehearsals you choose to call)
- theatre hire
- production of programmes

as these are covered by KDC centrally.

### **THE KDC LOCK UP**

We have a Lock Up containing basic props and costumes, this should be raided before any items are bought. You can request a guided tour of the lock up early in your rehearsal process so you can see what's available (contact the Artistic Director). An inventory of larger set items is also available.

## **SHOW BUDGET PREPARATION**

During your director interview, you will be asked about your plans as to what you'll spend your budget. If you're successful at interview, you'll then be asked to provide a more detailed breakdown of what your show will need and where your budget will be spent.

Before auditions, you'll have a chat with the Treasurer to go through the breakdown. This chat serves a variety of purposes, including:

- identification of any costs that would normally be covered centrally by KDC
- suggestions for any items that KDC might already possess or have ready access to
- suggestions of hire companies or other specialists we have used in the past and who offer good value
- an overall 'sense check' that items can be acquired at the estimated cost (quotes for large items are recommended)
- designation of the Show Budget Controller (see below)

As director you will have overall responsibility for the show's budget (unless you appoint a producer). This means you are responsible for:

- monitoring the show budget against the initial breakdown;
- approving all expenses to be applied against the budget;
- informing their Committee Liaison Officer if there are any major changes to how they will spend the budget,
- at the end of performance week, providing the Treasurer with a full breakdown of all expenses applied against the budget and returning all items bought with the show budget to the Lock Up.

The Treasurer will only reimburse expenses if:

- a valid receipt is provided; and
- it has been approved by the Show Budget Controller; and
- the show's budget has not already been exhausted

## **SAFETY**

We take the safety of the cast, crew and directors very seriously. However, it is also your responsibility as well as the Company's, that safety is the number one priority of the show.

If you are using any weapons i.e. for stage fights, you need to make sure that the relevant safety procedures are followed.

Only use recognised 'stage' weapons and make sure that while they are in your care you follow the guidelines you will have been given when you hire them.

If you have any questions or are unsure about anything, please ask.

## **SOCIAL**

KDC is a very sociable society. Life-long friendships, relationships, marriages, even babies have come from KDC shows, and this is something we'd like to see continue! We try to make sure that both casts socialise with each other after rehearsals – this often needs encouragement from the directors at the start of the process.

You will also be expected to arrange for your cast to go and see the other show being performed (usual ticket prices apply). It is a good opportunity for actors to support each other and for your cast to view the venue before your turn the following week.

In addition, KDC run several social events throughout the season – i.e. picnics, pub nights called "Thirsty Thursdays" and other events including a big summer party. These events and others are a great way to help you and your cast meet and bond with other members of the company. It's also another excellent way to promote your show to the company.

We expect directors to attend as many of them as possible, and to encourage your casts to do likewise – apart from anything else, it means they'll see more familiar friendly faces in the audience come show week!

Details of all social events are advertised on our website – [www.kdctheatre.com](http://www.kdctheatre.com), and also via the KDC Theatre group on Facebook.

## 8 – FURTHER HELP

The main role of the KDC committee is to help you put on the show you want to do.

At any point during the proposal or production stages of your show you have any questions or need help please contact us:

- Eddie Coleman (Artistic Director) – [artistic@kdctheatre.com](mailto:artistic@kdctheatre.com)
- Jenny McIntyre (Chair) – [chair@kdctheatre.com](mailto:chair@kdctheatre.com)
- Matt Matravers (Deputy Chair / Website Administrator) – [deputy@kdctheatre.com](mailto:deputy@kdctheatre.com)
- Andy Marchant (New Writing Co-ordinator) – [new.writing@kdctheatre.com](mailto:new.writing@kdctheatre.com)
- Fiona Thomas (Technical Director) – [tech@kdctheatre.com](mailto:tech@kdctheatre.com)

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**ANNEX A**  
**A list of plays produced by KDC since 2000**

<p>All's Well That End's Well (Shakespeare) – 2008  A Midsummer Night's Dream (Shakespeare) – 2000  Arsenic and Old Lace (Kesselring) – 2006  Bad Company (Bent) – 2006  Black Comedy (Shaffer) – 2008  Black Snow (Bulgakov) – 2003  Brezhnev's Children (Olwen Wymark) – 2004  Children's Hour (Hellman) – 2001  Cider with Rosie (Lee) – 2004  Daisy Pulls It Off (Deegan) – 2006  Electra (Sophocles) – 2006  Equus (Shaffer) – 2005  Hush (de Angelis) – 2002  Jake's Women (Simon) – 2009  Junk (John Retalick) – 2005  Lord of the Flies (Golding) – 2001  Metamorphosis (Berkoff) – 2002  Much Ado About Nothing (Shakespeare) – 2008  Noir (Straughan) – 2008  Numbers/Embassyland (Barry) – 2008  Our Country's Good (Wertenbaker) – 2000  Picasso at the Lapin Agile (Martin) – 2005  Playboy of the Western World (Synge) – 2000  Popcorn (Elton) – 2003  Red Noses (Barnes) – 2003  Roots (Wesker) – 2001  Rumours (Simon) – 2007  Shadow Play (Coward) – 2008  Six Degrees of Separation (Guare) – 2009</p>	<p>She Stoops to Conquer (Goldsmith) – 2007  Stags and Hens (Russell) – 2009  Sweeney Todd (Sondheim) – 2001  The Alchemist (Johnson) – 2003  The Changeling (Middleton and Rowley) – 2005  The Cherry Orchard (Chekov) – 2003  The Cripple of Inishman (McDonagh) – 2008  The Crucible (Arthur Miller) – 2004  The Diary of Anne Frank (Francis Goodrich) – 2006  The Hypochondriac (Moliere) – 2007  The Libertine (Jeffreys) – 2009  The Love of a Nightingale (Wertenbaker) – 2002  The Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare) – 2007  The Physicists (Durrenmatt) – 2004  The Rivals (Sheridan) – 2002  The Tempest (Shakespeare) – 2006  The Visit (Durrenmatt) – 2002  They Came to a City (Priestley) – 2007  Trumpets &amp; Raspberries (Dario Fo) – 2006  Twelfth Night (Shakespeare) – 2002  Top Girls (Churchill) – 2000  Troilus and Cressida (Shakespeare) – 2003  Trojan Women (Euripides) – 2000  Uncle Vanya – (Chekov) – 2006  Under Milk Wood (Thomas) – 2000  Who Killed Santa Claus (Feely) – 2004  Yerma (Lorca) – 2001</p>
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**ANNEX B**  
**A sample proposal**

*NB: A minimum of three play choices should be included in this proposal – if possible, it would be useful if you could include one non-rights\* play in your choice. (\*Non-right playwrights e.g. Shakespeare, Wilde, Goldsmith and other contemporary writers) - Each proposal should be no longer than a page.*

Name of Play

Playwright

Publisher of the play

(e.g. Samuel French, Faber, Josef Weinberger plays)

Cast size / Characters (names and ages)

3 M. 8 F

Mrs Harris, 29

Mrs James, 28

Mr Smith, 18

Joe Brown, 31

Short synopsis of the play

No more than three paragraphs

Your name and contact details

(Include a telephone number and email address)

**Please then email your proposal (in a word document please) to the Artistic Director at [artistic@kdctheatre.com](mailto:artistic@kdctheatre.com)**